

Physician Assistants

Interservice Physician Assistant Program

Provided by:
IPAP Clinical Coordinator, Phase II

Top 10 Jobs in America*

1. Software engineer	46.07%	\$80,427
2. College professor	31.39%	\$81,491
3. Financial advisor	25.92%	\$122,462
4. Human resources manager	23.47%	\$73,731
5. Physician Assistant	49.65%	\$75,117
6. Market research analyst	20.19%	\$82,317
7. Computer/IT analyst	36.10%	\$83,427
8. Real estate appraiser	22.78%	\$66,216
9. Pharmacist	24.57%	\$91,998
10. Psychologist	19.14%	\$66,359

* Per Money Magazine and Salary.com, April 2006

What is a Physician Assistant (PA)?

- Health care professionals
- Operating under **physician supervision**
- Civilian PAs must be **licensed** to practice medicine
- Federal Service PAs (Army, Navy, AF, Coast Guard, Public Health, VA) must be **credentialed** to practice

What is a Physician Assistant?

- PAs exercise **autonomy** in medical decision making
- Provide a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services
- Exercises **discretion and judgment**
- Uses **ethical** standards
- Orientated toward **service**

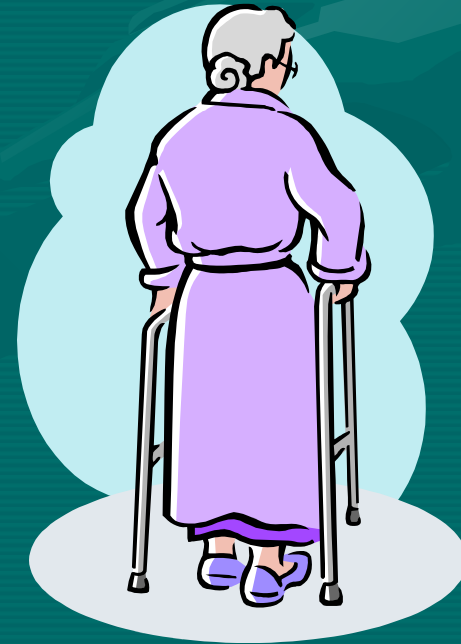
Key Duties, Tasks and Responsibilities

- Conduct physical exams
- Takes medical histories
- Order/Interpret tests
- Designs treatments
- Counsel on preventive health care
- Assist in surgery



Patient Populations

From Pediatrics to Geriatrics



Specialties

- Family Practice
- Emergency Medicine
- Pediatrics
- Internal Medicine
- Dermatology
- Gynecology
- General Surgery
- Orthopedics



- Occupational Medicine
- Research
- Education
- Many More

Military Specialties

- Special Forces
- HAWC
- Flight Medicine

How did the PA profession begin?

- Mid-1960s, physicians and educators recognized there was a shortage and uneven distribution of primary care physicians
- 1965, Dr. Eugene Stead of the Duke University Medical Center in North Carolina put together the first class of PAs
- 1967, Graduation of first class

How did the PA profession begin?

- First PA: Navy corpsmen with considerable medical training from the war in Vietnam but who had no comparable civilian employment
- The curriculum of the PA program was based in part on the fast-track training of doctors during World War II



How is a Physician Assistant educated?

- Broad education
- Education programs accredited by the **Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant**
- Educated in the medical model designed to complement physician training

How is a Physician Assistant educated?

- There are over **137** PA Programs around the country
- Average PA program curriculum runs about **26 months**
- Programs award either a **Bachelor or Masters Degree**

How is a Physician Assistant educated?

- Classroom and laboratory instruction in the basic medical and behavioral sciences
 - Anatomy, pharmacology, pathophysiology, clinical medicine, and physical diagnosis
- Clinical rotations
 - Internal medicine, family medicine, surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, emergency medicine, and geriatric medicine



How is a Physician Assistant educated?

- PAs are required to take ongoing **continuing medical education (CME)** classes and be retested on their clinical skills on a regular basis
- A number of **postgraduate PA programs** have also been established to provide practicing PAs with advanced education in medical specialties

Interservice Physician Assistant Program (IPAP)



Interservice PA Program

- Combined 1996
- Applicants must meet prerequisites
- Phase I- Fort Sam Houston- 52 Weeks
- Phase II- 53 weeks
 - Andrews, Langley, Eglin and Nellis
- Accredited through the **University of Nebraska Medical Center**
- Awarded Masters Degree
- Commissioned as 1st Lieutenants

Interservice PA Program

- Applicants must be active duty
 - Air Force
 - Army
 - Navy
 - Coast Guard
 - Army National Guard
 - Air National Guard
- Arduous selection process



Interservice PA Program

- **60** semester hours of transferable college credit
- At least **29** “in classroom” study
- GPA of **2.5** or better
- GPA of **3.0** in Math and Science courses

Mandato ry	Hours
Chemistry w/lab	8
Algebra	3
Social Sciences	6
English	6
Biology w/lab	4
Psychology	3
Anatomy & Physiology w/lab	8

Interservice PA Program

- SAT
 - Within 4 years of board. Minimum score of **450** and a composite score of no less than **1425** in the newer version and **950** in the previous version
- Physically qualified for world wide duty
- Not convicted by court-martial or Article 15 during current enlistment
- Eligible to extend or reenlist for **6 years** within 60 days of class start date

Interservice PA Program

- 2 years on active duty in grade E-3 to E-8, maximum of 14 years service
- ASVAB general score > **80**
- Meet age limit (less than 42 before commissioning)
- Last 5 EPRs

Interservice PA Program

- Letters of Recommendation
 - **AF Commissioned PA***
 - Immediate Supervisor
 - Staff Physician
 - Immediate Unit/SQ commander
 - May submit 2 additional letters if they desire
- Self-composed, handwritten essay (250 words or less) expressing reason for applying* *

Interservice PA Program

- All College transcripts
- GPA worksheet
- Current Records Review RIP
- AF Form 422- stating WWQ
- Fitness Program individual assessment report

Interservice PA Program

- 2007
 - Packages due to AFPC- 25 August 2007
 - Board meets- 19 September 2007
- 2008
 - Packages due to AFPC- about 28 January 2008
 - Board will convene- about 25-26 March 2008

Interservice PA Program

- AFPC POC
 - Email: afpc.dpamw@randolph.af.mil
 - DSN 665-2775
 - Commercial 210-565-2775

Interservice PA Program

- Stats from previous boards:

Year	2006	2007
Age	28	29.5
TIS	7.1 yrs	8
ASVA B	89	87.2
SAT	1162 Old Version	1669 New Version
GPA	3.5	3.35

What does "PA-C" stand for?

- Physician Assistant-Certified
- Has met the defined course of study and has undergone testing by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA)

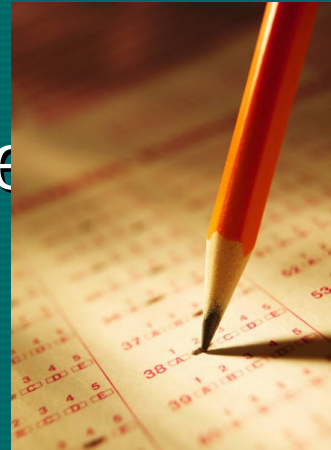
What is the NCCPA?

- An independent organization
- The commissioners represent a number of different medical professions
- It is **not a part** of the PA professional organization,

American Academy of Physician Assistants

NCCPA- Initial Certification

- After graduating PAs are eligible to seek certification by taking the
Physician Assistant National Certifying
Examination
(PANCE)
- Multiple-choice test
- 360 questions
- Basic medical and surgical knowledge



NCCPA- Initial Certification

- After passing PAs are issued an NCCPA certificate, entitling them to use the “PA-C” designation



NCCPA- Maintenance

- The **six-year** certificate maintenance cycle is divided into three two-year periods
- During every **two-year period**, PA-C designees must
 - earn and log a minimum of **100 hours of CME**
 - submit a certification **maintenance fee**
- CME hours required for each two-year cycle must have been earned during the cycle

NCCPA- Recertification

- At the end of each 6 year cycle the PA must recertify
- There are 2 choices for this:

	PANRE Physician Assistant National Recertification Exam	Pathway II
Exam Location/ Delivery	Computer-based exam administered at Prometric <u>testing centers</u>	<u>Web-based exam</u> taken anywhere
Reference Materials	No reference materials allowed	You can use reference materials to complete this open-book exam
Time Allotted	5 Hours 	6 Weeks 
Additional Requirements	None	100 Elective Component points earned any time during the current six-year certification maintenance cycle

What is the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA)?

- Only PA national professional society
 - Represents all physician assistants
 - Every area of medicine
- Founded in 1968
- Federated structure of 57 chartered chapters
- Represents PAs
 - All 50 states
 - District of Columbia
 - Guam
 - Federal services

What's the difference between a PA and a physician?

- One of the main differences between PA education and physician education is

not the core content

of the curriculum, but

the amount of time

spent in formal education

What's the difference between a PA and a physician?

- In addition to time in school, physicians are required to do an **internship**, and the majority also complete a residency in a specialty following that...PAs **do not** have to undertake an internship or residency

What's the difference between a PA and a physician?

- A physician has **complete responsibility** for the care of the patient....**PAs share** that responsibility with the supervising physicians

Can PAs prescribe medications?

- **Yes!** **223 million Rx** per year
- All fifty states, the District of Columbia, and Guam have enacted laws that authorize PA prescribing



Can PAs prescribe medications?

- Very few disciplinary actions against PAs for misuse or abuse of privileges
- No significant increase in liability or malpractice claims
- Liability insurers do not increase premiums when R_x authority is granted

Can PAs prescribe medications?

Controlled Substances

- **Schedule I:** No accepted medical use in the United States and have a high abuse potential. Some examples are **heroin and LSD**
- **Schedule II:** High abuse potential with severe psychic or physical dependence liability. Schedule II controlled substances consist of certain narcotic, stimulant and depressant drugs. For example: **opium, morphine, codeine, methadone**
- **Schedule III:** Abuse potential less than those in Schedules I and II, and include compounds containing limited quantities of certain narcotic drugs and non-narcotic drugs. For Example: **Tylenol with Codeine**
- **Schedule IV:** Abuse potential less than those listed in Schedule III. For example: **Xanax**
- **Schedule V:** Abuse potential less than those listed in Schedule IV and consist primarily of preparations containing limited quantities of certain narcotic and stimulant drugs generally for **antitussive, antidiarrheal and analgesic purposes**

Can PAs prescribe medications?

Schedule II-V	Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Idaho, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming
Schedule III-V	Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Guam, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia
No Scheduled drugs	Alabama, D.C., Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri and Ohio
Formulary	Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont and West Virginia

Can PAs prescribe medications?

- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has a registration category for physician assistants and other "midlevel practitioners" authorized by state law or regulation to prescribe controlled substances
- The military PA is **NOT** required to have a separate DEA number

“Drawing the line”



- **Varies** with training, experience, and state law
- Corresponds to the **supervising physician's practice**
- Will see many of the **same types** of patients as the physician
- Cases handled by physicians are generally the more **complicated** medical cases or those cases which require care that is not a routine part of the PA's scope of work

“Drawing the line”



- Referral to the physician, or close consultation between the patient-PA-physician, is done for **unusual or hard to manage cases**
- Physician assistants are taught to
 “know our limits”
and refer to physicians appropriately.

It is an important part of PA training!!!!

Air Force PAs

- Current Number:
 - Authorized: **290**
 - Currently on AD: **260**
- Specialties:
 - ENT, Orthopedics, EM, Education, Special Ops
- Deployments
 - War, humanitarian aid, and peacekeeping missions

Biomedical Sciences Corps

- Physician Assistant
- Physical Therapy
- Optometry
- Podiatry
- Audiology/Speech Path.
- Clinical Psychology
- Clinical Social Worker
- Occupational Therapy
- Biomedical Scientist
- Dietetics
- Pharmacy
- Laboratory
- Aerospace Physiology
- Bioenvironmental Eng.
- Public Health
- Entomology
- Health Physics



Board Certification Pay (BCP)

- Active duty Biomedical Sciences Corps officers performing as healthcare providers
- Criteria:
 - Possess a post baccalaureate/first professional degree in their specialty
 - Certified by a recognized professional board in their specialty (i.e. NCCPA, PA's)





Air Force Instruction 44-119

- *CLINICAL PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT*
AFI 44-119
- **6.14. Physician Assistants:**
- **6.14.1. Background.** Physician assistants (PAs) are health professionals who provide primary or specialty medical care with physician supervision.
- Within the physician/physician assistant (PA) relationship, PAs exercise autonomy in medical decision making and provide a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services.
- The clinical role of physician assistants includes, but is not limited to, primary care, family practice, and specialty areas such as orthopedics, surgery, cardiac perfusion, bone marrow transplant/oncology, emergency medicine, otorhinolaryngology, pediatrics, and internal medicine.
- Physician assistants deploy to provide medical support in war, humanitarian aid, and peacekeeping missions.
- PA practice is centered on patient care and disease prevention and may include clinical teaching, patient education, research, and administrative activities.



Air Force Instruction 44-119

- **6.14.2. Education and Certification Requirements:**
 - 6.14.2.1. **Graduation** from a physician assistant training program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) and acceptable to the HQ USAF/SG. Either a **bachelor's degree or a master's degree**.
 - 6.14.2.2. PAs must obtain initial **board certification** by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) **within 12 months of graduation**. **NOTE:** Civilian accessions should be certified prior to entering active, reserve, or guard duty.
 - 6.14.2.3. **Certification is maintained** by meeting NCCPA continuing medical education and retesting requirements. Should certain operational situations preclude this, temporary waivers will be considered.



Air Force Instruction 44-119

- **6.14.3. Scope of Practice.** Physician Assistants:
 - 6.14.3.1. Are **credentialed** through the medical treatment facility and privileged as any member of the staff of the particular service in which they practice.
 - 6.14.3.2. Assess patient medical conditions, diagnose, plan therapy, and prescribe medications appropriate for the diagnosis to include ordering and evaluating laboratory tests, ordering and evaluating imaging studies, and providing for follow-up or referral care.
 - 6.14.3.3. May pull PCM **primary call and work as sole provider** in extended-hours clinics with physician consultation available as described below if these specific privileges have been granted as code “1” on the privilege list (see paragraph 5.7.1.9.1.). Until the privilege lists are updated, these items will need to be added to the form. Ultimately, this is a local MTF decision, based primarily on the PA’s physician supervisor and the needs of the patient population served by the MTF.
 - 6.14.3.4. PAs may work in the **ESD** managing patients, consistent with their training and experience. Refer to paragraph 6.14.5. for additional information.
 - 6.14.3.5. PAs who are privileged to assist with **inpatient care** may admit patients to the precepting physician’s service after first consulting with the precepting physician. All patient orders must be reviewed and cosigned by the precepting physician within 24 hours.
 - 6.14.3.6. May **act independently** in areas of demonstrated competency within their designated scope of practice, as indicated by code “1” on their privilege list.



Air Force Instruction 44-119

- **6.14.4. Supervision:**
- 6.14.4.1. A **physician preceptor must be identified**, in writing, for each PA. This information will be placed in Section I of the PA's PCF.
- 6.14.4.2. Preceptor must be a physician who provides consultation, clinical feedback, and general oversight of the PA's practice.
- 6.14.4.3. PAs granted MTF privileges must have physician **consultation available either in person, by phone, or electronic means when they are performing ambulatory clinic direct patient care activities**. Ideally, the primary preceptor should routinely be available for consultation. If the primary preceptor is not available, any physician on staff who is privileged for the same scope of practice may supervise/precept or be consulted by the PA.
- 6.14.4.4. As with any privileged provider, an ongoing, **professional peer review process** and periodic formal review of PA performance is required and is accomplished at least biennially as part of the reprivileging process. Examples of competency assessment include periodic review of a representative sample of medical records, direct observation of performance, and verbal/written assessment of clinical knowledge/skills.



Air Force Instruction 44-119

- **6.14.5. Supervision of PAs in the Emergency Services Department:**
- 6.14.5.1. The ESD physician must be present in the facility and be immediately available by two-way voice communication.
- 6.14.5.2. The ESD physician reviews the medical record of each patient under the care of the PA prior to the patient's departure from the ESD. The exception to this is when the ESD triages the patient to ESD fast track or acute minor care areas. If the patient could have been seen initially in an acute care clinic and truly does not need ESD care, then the records review is the same as if the patient was only seen in a clinic setting.
- **New change coming: Emergency Medicine PAs will NOT have to have each chart countersigned before the patient leaves the ED**



Air Force Instruction 44-119

- 6.15. **Specialty Physician Assistants:**
- **6.15.1. Background.** Specialty Physician Assistants (SPAs) are physician assistants who have met all of the definitions and requirements of physician assistants described in paragraph **6.14.** and have received **subsequent additional training.** Specialty PAs include orthopedics, otorhinolaryngology, surgery, cardiac perfusion, bone marrow transplant/oncology, and emergency medicine. Specialty physician assistants also function in internal medicine and pediatrics.
- **6.15.2. Education and Certification Requirements.** In addition to those required of all PAs, specialty PAs **must complete residency or fellowship** training of 12 months or more in a medical specialty program approved by and acceptable to the HQ USAF/SG. Usually, specialty PAs have been trained at approved sites within the Air Force, DoD, or at accredited civilian institutions.
- **6.15.3. Scope of Practice.** Is consistent with scope defined in paragraph **6.14.3.** but expanded to reflect nature of specialty practice and approved/supported by the medical specialty staff, reflected in the privileging process outlined in **Chapter 5.** Specialty PAs use the privilege list designated for the specialty physician, as well as the family practice privilege list, as appropriate.
- **6.15.4. Supervision.** Recognizing that the specialty PA possesses unique skills, supervision and oversight should be by a **physician in that same specialty.** See paragraph **6.14.4.** and **6.14.5.** for further requirements.

PA Week

- **October 6 - 12**
- October 6, 1967, the first physician assistants graduated from Duke University
- In commemoration of the beginning of the profession, many constituent organizations and individual PAs host **community activities** and **public information programs** throughout October
- State and local government officials can participate as well by issuing proclamations and statements of support for the PA profession

Hug a PA!



References

- American Academy of PAs
 - www.aapa.org
- National Commission on Certification of PAs
 - www.nccpa.net
- Money Magazine and Salary.com, April 2006
- AFI 44-119